

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 EB-08 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 SP-02 OMB-01 TRSE-00 L-03 SSO-00
INRE-00 IO-13 AID-05 NSCE-00 SS-15 /095 W
-----052076 271702Z /47

O R 271625Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8110
INFO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0660

TUNIS FOR AMBASSADOR HAYNES

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AG SHUM EFIN
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS AND IFI LOANS

REF: STATE 046010

1. EMBASSY AGREES WITH DEPARTMENT ON NEED FOR CAUTION IN
DRAWING LINKAGE BETWEEN GOA PERFORMANCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND
U.S.VOTES ON IFI LOANS TO ALGERIA. AS LATEST DRAFT OF
HUMAN RIGHTS EVALUATION PLAN FOR ALGERIA (11/23/77) STATES,
A GENERAL APPROACH OF SENSITIZING ALGERIANS TO OUR INTEREST
IN HUMAN RIGHTS WILL BE MORE PRODUCTIVE THAN ANY DIRECT
PRESSURE.

2. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE GIVEN ABSENCE OF DETAILED,
CONFIRMED INFORMATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. THERE ARE
PERSISTENT RUMORS, MOST RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN THE EUROPEAN
EDITION OF TIME MAGAZINE FOR FEBRUARY 20 AND IN LE MONDE FOR
FEBRUARY 25 AND BROADCAST OVER RADIO MONTE CARLO, THAT
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ALGERIA'S MOST PROMINENT POLITICAL PRISONER, AHMED
BEN BELLA, WILL SOON BE RELEASED OR PLACED UNDER MUCH
MORE LIBERAL CONDITIONS OF HOUSE ARREST THAN IN PAST.
IF THIS OCCURS, SIMILAR STEPS ARE LIKELY TO BE TAKEN
VIS A VIS SIGNERS OF 1976 MANIFESTO PLACED UNDER HOUSE
ARREST (IN ANY CASE, THEIR DETENTION HAS BEEN REMARKABLY
FLEXIBLE; THEY MAY RECEIVE VISITORS AT ANY TIME AND ARE

PERMITTED TO TRAVEL FOR FAMILY AND OTHER OCCASIONS).

3. DEMARCHES OF ANY KIND ON BEHALF OF SPECIFIC LEADERS OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION ARE LIKELY TO HAVE NO EFFECT OTHER THAN NEGATIVE. THEY COULD, AS DRAFT OF HUMAN RIGHTS EVALUATION PLAN MAKES CLEAR, ENDANGER OUR CONSIDERABLE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS WITHOUT IMPROVING SITUATION VIS A VIS POLITICAL DETAINEES.

4. THIS DOES NOT PRECLUDE GENERAL APPROACH ON HUMAN RIGHTS, WHICH COULD ENCOMPASS EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER UNHCR ACCESS TO SAHARAN REFUGEES AS WELL AS OVER DETENTION OF POLITICAL OPPONENTS IN GENERAL.

5. DEPARTMENT WILL RECOGNIZE THAT ALGERIA DOES NOT SEE QUESTION OF UNHCR ACCESS TO SAHARAN REFUGEES AS HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE AT ALL. IN ITS VIEW, WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM IN ITS ENTIRETY IS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, AND U.S. IS IMPLICITLY AMONG CULPRITS IN NOT SUPPORTING SAHARAN "RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION".

6. WE RECOMMEND THAT AMBASSADOR RAISE LINKAGE BETWEEN HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE AND U.S. SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN GENERAL WAY IN ONE OF PERIODIC TOURS D' HORIZON WITH SECRETARY GENERAL OF GOVERNMENT SMAIL HAMDANI. HE WOULD MAKE POINT THAT HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS
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ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT IN U.S. DECISIONS OF VARIOUS FORMS OF ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING LOANS. DEPENDING ON DEVELOPMENTS IN DETENTION OF BEN BELLA AND OTHERS, HE COULD THEN RAISE SPECIFIC SITUATION IN ALGERIA IF NECESSARY.

7. DEPARTMENT WILL RECOGNIZE THAT EVEN LOW-KEY APPROACH DESCRIBED ABOVE WILL DRAW RETORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN WHICH ALGERIANS ARE INTERESTED AND ON WHICH THEY FIND OUR OWN RECORD DEFICIENT. PALESTINE IS MOST OBVIOUS CASE IN POINT. STEPHAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, LOANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978ALGIER00660
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: GS DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780089-1026
Format: TEL
From: ALGIERS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780211/aaaaaiwz.tel
Line Count: 105
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1d8608ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 46010
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3450510
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUMAN RIGHTS AND IFI LOANS
TAGS: SHUM, EFIN, AG, IFI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1d8608ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014